

Responding to Chemical Sensitivity in the Workplace

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Health Strategies (NCEHS)**

MCS may be a preventable disability. The key factors are recognition of chemically induced illness and a sensitivity on the part of management and coworkers toward the health imperatives of those affected by indoor pollutants.

People sick from workplace exposures want accommodation and remediation, not litigation. They want to remain productive. Those experiencing more severe symptoms require immediate removal from triggering exposures to minimize reactions and to avert permanent disability.

Many individuals can be accommodated with a little creativity and common sense at minimal expense. NCEHS has assisted management and affected individuals in such modifications. Recommendations include:

- An office with a window that opens;
- A well-ventilated work environment free of pollutants such as tobacco smoke, pesticides, toxic and fragrance-laden cleaning products, deodorizers, and exhaust fumes;
- Selection of least toxic/allergenic building furnishings and supplies;
- Prenotification of building events such as painting or pesticide applications with provisions for alternative work arrangements;
- Education of coworkers as to the nature of the disability to avert stigma and harassment;

Chemical Sensitivity -- The Epidemic of the 90's

Problematic Environmental Exposures

- Air Freshener • Mothballs • Newsprint •
- Agricultural Pesticides • Carpeting •
- Fabric Softener • Tobacco Smoke • Bug Spray •
- Particle Board • Paint & Varnish •
- Contaminated Water • Vinyl Shower Curtain •
- Chlorinated Cleanser • Perfume & Cologne •
- Smokestack Emissions • Pesticides •
- Woodsmoke • Copy Machines •
- Auto & Diesel Exhaust • Disinfectants •
- Landfill Emissions • Permanent Press Clothing •
- Detergents • Laser Printer • Plastic •
- Carbonless Paper • Adhesives • Aftershave •
- Lawn Care Pesticides • Dry Cleaning •
- Fragranced Products • Mildewcide • Potpourri •
- Stainproofing • Felt Tip Marker •
- Nail Polish/Remover • Kerosene Heater •
- Veneered Wood • Correction Fluid •

The National Center for Environmental Health Strategies (NCEHS), 1100 Rural Avenue, Voorhees, NJ 08043 • (609) 429-5358. NCEHS publishes *The Delicate Balance*, a newsletter on indoor pollution, environmental health issues, and chemical sensitivity.

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(609)429-5358

RESOURCE LIST

Household, cleaning and personal products; medical supplies and equipment; face masks and air filters; and other items.

AFM Enterprises

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San Diego, CA 92101
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P.O. Box 444
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(719)889-2989

American Environmental Health Foundation

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Dallas, TX 75231
(800) 428-2343
(214) 361-9515

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San Francisco, CA 94109
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(*Shampoo only*)

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(505) 438-3448

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(817) 776-4878

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MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM NCEHS

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Chemical Exposures: Low Levels and High Stakes

Prof. Nicholas Ashford, MIT, & Dr. Claudia Miller, Univ. of Texas Health Science Center, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 214 pp., Hardcover, 1990.

Expanded version of the NJ Dept. of Health Report that won the World Health Organization Macedo Award

\$ 22.00 \$ 24.00

Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

National Academy Press, 195 pp., Paperback, 1992.
Proceedings from NAS/EPA conference.

\$ 25.00 \$ 27.00

Chapter 9, "Use of Biologic Markers in Controversial Areas of Environmental Health"

From *Biologic Markers in Immunotoxicology*, National Academy Press, 1992.

\$ 2.00 \$ 2.00

Chemical Sensitivity:

A Report to the New Jersey State Department of Health

Ashford & Miller, 162 pp., coil-bound, 1989.

\$ 18.00 \$ 20.00

Chemical Hypersensitivity Syndrome Study

Bascom, 1989. (The Maryland Study of Chemical Sensitivity)

\$ 15.00 \$ 17.00

Complete set of reviewers' comments for the Maryland Study

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HUD Legal Memorandum, April 14, 1992. ONLY

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\$ 11.00 \$ 13.00

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Perform cleaning, maintenance, and remodeling activities when the building is free of occupants. Ventilate such areas as possible.

Prevent the growth of mold and other biologicals by regulating humidity, providing adequate ventilation, and by repairing leaks and replacing water-damaged materials.

Provide prenotification of building events such as remodeling, construction, pesticide applications, floor waxing, carpet shampooing, and similar activities with provisions for alternative workspace as necessary. Signage may be useful, in part, to provide such notification to those entering the building as well as building occupants.

Educate management and coworkers regarding the need to maintain a pollution-free environment for the health of all building occupants. This effort should include information on chemical sensitivities and other environmental disabilities in order to create a positive attitude and avert stigma and harassment.